

The U.S. media is already owned and controlled by a very select group of wealthy industrialists. If you allow cross-ownership of media, you are authorizing the creation of legal monopolies that will not benefit society as a whole. The TV and print media do little enough investigative and/or objective reporting as it is, and "infotainment" has replaced hard journalism. If ownership reverts to an even smaller group of people, the American public will be left with few, if any, ways of obtaining information about a vast range of subjects. The larger the news organization is, the more cost-effective it is to rely heavily on news wire services and, as a result, even less local and investigative reporting is performed. This has created a situation where organizations with deep pockets can afford to communicate their views or products quickly and easily to the public but also makes it difficult for the public to find out about "other than mainstream" issues and events.

What ever happened to the rules requiring radio and television stations to offer free equal time to all political candidates in exchange for their originally free station licenses? The whole political process in the U.S. is being severely distorted by the need for political parties to raise funds to purchase air time on stations that are supposed to be providing this free service in the first place. I want to be able to hear what Ralph Nader and other fringe parties have to say, even if I have no intention of voting for them.

By allowing the ownership of media to be concentrated in a few hands, you are also increasing the risk that station owners will either self-censor or become censors themselves, because they may be afraid of alienating their largest advertisers. Increased media concentration also opens up the possibility that only a few people will be able to be in a position to intellectually influence the majority, and those with dissenting views will be frozen out, with no outlet for expression. The quality of broadcasting is now in a race to the bottom, and having a few large corporations owning and controlling them will guarantee that the quality will continue to deteriorate. I also believe that it is in the financial best interests of these large corporations to keep the American public jingoistically ignorant and ill-informed about the world outside of the U.S.

I object to the concentration of the media because multi-media owners do not have a vested interest in reporting on local issues. It is getting more and more difficult to find out what is going on in my local town, unless the sponsor of the event also buys advertising space - this has the effect of excluding not-for-profit and citizens groups, who usually do not have a budget for advertising.

In terms of diversity in the media, there is very little of it. I would like to hear from people with dissenting views and there is no forum for different opinions. I'm tired of seeing the same old white male talking heads on talk shows, and I'm more than sick of stereotypical "minority" shows. I want to see and hear more diversity and concentrating ownership will have the opposite effect.

I am also deeply concerned about the lack of investigative reporting being done. Large corporations are reducing their investigative reporting budgets and increasing their "infotainment" budgets - this leaves little room for serious research. In light of the fact that many of the large corporations who are big advertisers, this gives those advertisers tremendous financial and political clout over the media when editors are deciding whether to public adverse reports.

Concentrated ownership also means that the few remaining owners are very vulnerable to government control, censorship and propaganda. Investigative reporters are becoming lazy and often resort to accepting at face value quotes from "close sources" instead of doing their own homework on critical issues.

I hope that the FCC will look at the broader picture, instead of being influenced by lobbyists. The difference between a politician and a statesman is that the politician looks to the next election and a statesman looks to the next century. I hope that the FCC chooses to be a statesman, instead of caving in to the politicians.